(NCCF) in the wake of drought and an Inter-Ministerial Central Team is visiting the State from 31st July, 2001 to 3rd August, 2001 for assessment of the situation.

(b) In addition to release of Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) during 1998-99 to 2000-01, assistance amounting to Rs. 49.98 crore during 1998-99 and Rs. 17.09 crore during 1999-2000, from National Fund for Calamity Relief were released to the State, in the wake of natural calamities.

Coconut Prices

1393. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether coconut is sold for Rs. 2/- in Kerala and Goa, for Rs. 9/- in Mumbai and Rs. 10/- in Delhi;

(b) if so, the reasons for which the producer gets such a little price, and for which the consumer is paying so much price;

(c) why is coconut sold at five times the price of buying;

(d) whether Government have any plans to regulate the prices of coconut so that the producer gets better price and the buyer gets relief while buying coconut; and

(e) if so, the details of such measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) The prices of coconut varied between Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 4.00 per nut in July, 2001 in Goa and Kerala; while in Mumbai and Delhi it was between Rs. 7 to Rs. 7.50 per nut in 2000-2001 season.

The difference in prices between Goa and Kerala, the producing areas, and Mumbai and Delhi, the consuming centers are due to labour charges, storage/warehousing, transportation, local and state taxes, interest on working capital, cost of holding stocks, wastages and other incidental charges.

(d) and (e) In order to give price advantage to both the consumers and coconut growers, coconut has been covered under the Minimum

Support Price scheme of the Government and the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Milling copra of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) has been fixed at Rs. 3300/- per qtl. and of Ball Copra (FAQ) at Rs. 3550/- per qtl. for 2001 season. A record quantity of 2.35 lakh tones of copra has been procured by National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), a central nodal agency, as on 26.07.2001. To assist coconut cultivators, technologies have also been developed for diversification of coconut products to items like coconut cream, skimmed milk powder, packaging and preservation of coconut water, coconut chips, vinegar, etc.

Decline in groundnut production

1394. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the total production of groundnut in the country, State-wise, during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is a sharp decline in its production;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps are being taken to improve production of groundnut in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) State-wise total production of groundnut during the last 3 years is given in the enclosed Statement (*see* below)

(b) and (c) There has been a increasing trend in the production of groundnut. However, during the year 1999-2000, the production of groundnut has declined due to severe drought in major groundnut growing States.

(d) In order to increase the production of groundnut in the country, a centrally sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) is under implementation. Under the Programme financial